

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA'S BE-
LOVED, PAULA RIGGS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 10, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Northwest Florida's beloved Paula Riggs. Mrs. Riggs was a dedicated public servant, a staple in the community, and all of Northwest Florida mourns her passing.

Paula Riggs was born in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba while her father was serving our nation in the United States Navy. As the daughter of a naval officer, her family moved around often; however, her parents instilled in Mrs. Riggs an everlasting love and affection for their native home in Northwest Florida. Her interest in public service began at a young age, when she would spend hours with her uncle Harold Goodwin, a former mayor of DeFuniak Springs, listening and learning.

After receiving her college degree from the University of North Florida, Paula Riggs decided to move her family to Northwest Florida to raise her four children along the Gulf Coast. Mrs. Riggs was a loving and devoted mother to her children, and she was also known throughout her community as a true neighbor who offered her kindness to all those she knew. She became a successful small business owner, before joining the Mary Esther City Council in 1995.

Mrs. Riggs' had a deep commitment to helping those who were most in need of assistance, and she continued her service to Northwest Florida in 1998 when she was elected as a County Commissioner for Okaloosa County, Florida. As a County Commissioner she was known for her assiduous work ethic and steadfast commitment to improving the community. In addition to her service on the County Commission, she served as Chairman of the Okaloosa-Walton County Transportation Planning Organization, as well as Chairman of the State Library Council, and her hard work and leadership earned her an appointment by Florida Governor Jeb Bush to serve on the Intergovernmental Relations Legislative Council. Although she was forced to step down from her position on the County Commission in 2004 due to illness, she remained a steadfast presence in the community.

To some, Paula Riggs will be remembered as a dedicated public servant and a successful small business owner. To others, she will be remembered as a generous and caring neighbor always willing to lend a hand. To her family, she will most fondly be remembered as a wonderful and loving mother to her four children and an inspiration to her two grandchildren. Her impact on Northwest Florida was immense, and her legacy will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it gives me great pride to honor the life and service of Paula Riggs. My wife Vicki joins me in extending our most sincere condolences to the entire Riggs family.

JIM AND BOBBIE MELLO'S 70TH
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 10, 2012

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Jim and Bobbie Mello on the occasion of their 70th Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on September 6, 2012.

James Mello, born in Turlock on April 18, 1922, was destined to meet Barbara (Bobbie) McDonald, born in Turlock on April 12, 1926. Fate finally intervened on a summer day when they met when she was picnicking at Crane Park. Jim came by riding his horse and spotted her. Being a 20 year-old romantic, he devised a plan to meet Bobbie. The plan was to come back a while later and throw watermelons at her. Well, it worked perfectly, and Jim and Bobbie were married about two months later.

The plan was to borrow the best man's car and drive to Minden, Nevada on September 5, 1942, to marry. However, on that day, the best man had his tires repossessed. Undaunted, they borrowed the car of Jim's employer, drove to Minden, and were married the next day.

Two months later, in November, Jim left to join the U.S. Army. Bobbie moved back to live with her Grandmother, who had raised her and her younger sister, Gloria, since they were very young children. Three years later, Jim returned from World War II, where he served as a tanker under General George Patton and was in the famous "Battle of the Bulge."

After his return from service, he worked for Turlock Trenching Company. Jim and his brother-in-law, Clinton Hayes, bought the company in 1951 and ran it out of Jim and Bobbie's 10 acre ranch for many years. In 1987, Jim went to work for Swanson Farms until his retirement in 2003.

After Jim retired, he and Bobbie moved into their present home in the city of Turlock. They have two daughters—their eldest daughter is Sandra, married to Steve Vieira. Sandy and Steve just celebrated their 49th anniversary. Their youngest daughter, Janice, married Bob Borba. Jan and Bob will soon celebrate their 47th anniversary. Jim and Bobbie have four grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

In addition to running their own business, Jim and Bobbie were very involved in their community. Jim served 30 years as a volunteer fireman and retired as Assistant Chief of Turlock Rural Fire Department. They both are lifetime members of the Turlock Horsemen's Club and belong to several organizations including American Legion, VFW, Native Daughters of the Golden West, and have volunteered for many organizations and causes over the years. They serve as great role models for their family.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the partnership, love, and trust that aided Jim and Bobbie in reaching this milestone of an anniversary. Congratulations on the past 70 years, and I wish you the best success in the years to come.

HONORING THE CAREER OF
MAJOR GENERAL GERALD L.
PRATHER AND HIS BEING
NAMED "PERSON OF THE DEC-
ADE" IN DEL RIO, TX BY THE
BOY SCOUTS

HON. FRANCISCO "QUICO" CANSECO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 10, 2012

Mr. CANSECO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of a true American hero—Air Force Major General Gerald L. Prather. General Prather was born in La Grange, Georgia in 1935. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1954, and received his pilot wings and commission in August of 1956. During his distinguished career, General Prather has flown F-84F's, F-100D's, C-130's, and was a B-52 pilot and training instructor. In 1967 he was assigned to Mactan Isle Airfield in the Philippines, where he completed more than 500 combat support missions in Southeast Asia. The general eventually became the commander of the European Communications Area in 1977, and was promoted to Major General in March of 1983, with date of rank July 1, 1979. General Prather's military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with two oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force and Marine Presidential Unit Citation Emblems, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon with oak leaf cluster, and the Air Force Organization Excellence Award Ribbon.

General Prather's life and career embodies the best of America and of our armed forces, and just recently he was named by the Boy Scouts as the "Man of the Decade" in Del Rio, TX, home of Laughlin Air Force Base. General Prather was also honored this past weekend when Laughlin Air Force base named a street on the base after him—a great honor for a great American.

As the representative of the 23rd District of Texas, which includes Del Rio and Laughlin Air Force Base, I wish to congratulate General Prather on his recent honors and thank him for a tremendous life of service to our nation.

NAVY LT. BRAD SNYDER EARNS
OLYMPIC GOLD

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 10, 2012

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide my colleagues with an update on a remarkable young man, Navy Lt. Brad Snyder, of St. Petersburg, Florida, an American hero who lost his eye sight in Afghanistan while carrying out an extremely dangerous mission as a member of an explosive ordinance detail.

When I last reported to you in July, Lt. Snyder, who I had the privilege to appoint to the U.S. Naval Academy, had just qualified to represent the United States swim team at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Today, I am proud to report to you that Lt. Snyder has brought home two gold medals and one silver